

Augusta University

Policy Library

Augusta University Distance and Correspondence Education

Policy Manager: Office of the Vice Provost for Instruction

POLICY STATEMENT

The intent of this policy is to provide a framework for the development and maintenance of distance education programs at Augusta University (AU) and to ensure that all distance education programs are properly supervised and fall under the academic policies of the institution.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:

- Alumni Faculty Graduate Students Health Professional Students
 Staff Undergraduate Students Vendors/Contractors Visitors
 Other:

DEFINITIONS

Distance Education: For the purposes of this policy, distance education is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or other digital media if used as part of the distance education course or program.

Correspondence Courses: For the purpose of this policy, correspondence courses are part of a formal educational process under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; courses are typically self-paced.

PROCESS & PROCEDURES

AU offers a limited number of distance learning programs and courses designed to help meet the evolving learning needs of students who prefer the online format or require more flexibility in their coursework.

Distance learning should provide opportunities for a demographic that needs accessible education beyond the physical campus. Distance programs and courses are designed for students who may be from another state where a similar program/course is not offered or may not be able to attend a class at a specific time, day or place due to balancing their career, family responsibilities, travel, and/or physical challenges.

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Executive Sponsor: Vice Provost for Instruction

Next Review: 11/2024

Currently, AU offers distance education degree programs and courses the institutions Learning Management System (LMS) [Desire2Learn] and other online educational tools such as Echo360 lecture viewing, Cisco WebEx synchronous audio and video chatting [ending Fall 2021], Zoom and TEAMS meeting software, and related technologies. These courses can be synchronous or asynchronous and or may use a combination of live chat rooms, threaded discussions, electronic bulletin boards, email and/or interactive Web pages. Some courses are delivered via synchronous video conferencing with a professor at one site delivering live two-way video instruction to students at another site. The content and delivery of distance programs and courses is the responsibility of the faculty and are subject to the same approval process for initiation and modification as are face-to-face programs. The program chair/director working in cooperation with the college/school dean is also responsible for ensuring that the faculty member assigned to teach distance education courses is qualified to teach in the modality of the course.

Academic Regulations and Curriculum

Unless otherwise noted, AU policies, standards, academic regulations and guidelines apply to distance education and correspondence programs or courses. This includes but is not limited to the following policies:

[Academic Honesty](#)

[Academic Rights and Responsibilities](#)

[Academic Standing for Undergraduate Students](#)

[Certificate Program Approval Policy](#)

[Change in Name of Academic Program, Degree, Center, Institute, or Academic Department](#)

[Classification of Undergraduate Students](#)

[Community Borrowers Policy](#)

[Contract Renewal Policy](#)

[Course Numbering, Cross-Listing, Cross-Leveling, and Suffixes Policy](#)

[Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#)

[Curriculum and Academic Program Approval](#)

[Curriculum Approval Policy](#)

[Dean's List Policy](#)

[Definition of A Credit Hour](#)

[Distinguished Faculty Titles Policy](#)

[Faculty Action and Approval Process Policy](#)

[Faculty Appointment Policy](#)

[Faculty Classification Policy](#)

[Faculty Recruitment Policy](#)

[Faculty Removal](#)

[Grading System Policy](#)

[Graduate Teaching Assistant Policy](#)

[Graduation with Honors](#)

[Grievance for Visiting Academes Policy](#)

[Mandatory Fee Waiver Policy](#)

[Mandatory Student Device Ownership](#)

[Multiple Graduate Degrees](#)

[Participation in Commencement](#)

[Standard Course Meeting Times](#)

[Student Academic Appeals Policy](#)

[Student Academic Grievance](#)

[Student Attendance Policy](#)

[Student Course Load](#)

[Transfer Credit Policy](#)

[Electronic Access Control](#)

[Electronic Data Retention](#)

[Electronic Data Storage Backup](#)

[Encryption Policy](#)

[Enterprise Facilities Use by Non-AU Affiliates](#)

[Information and Security Training Policy](#)

[Information Security Program Policy](#)

[Information Technology Configuration Standards Policy](#)

[Mobile Device Policy](#)

[Password Protection Policy](#)

[Procurement of Information Technology Policy](#)

[Remote Access Policy](#)

At AU the academic units that provide oversight of programs that are offered via distance education are charged with the responsibility of determining that they comply with all AU policies and standards. They are to keep the curriculum current, supply all necessary resources, and ensure there are appropriate learning outcomes for the degree or certificate awarded. The academic unit will also perform on-going evaluation and assessment for each distance program and course.

Security Measures for Identification

AU recognizes the importance of maintaining the privacy and security of student identity and student records in an environment of computer networked digital records storage. Additionally, AU recognizes that faculty and students participating in distance and correspondence classes and programs will need to keep student privacy issues as they interact. To that end, AU is diligent in protecting the security, confidentiality, integrity, and availability of all student records, including student identity. The University employs strict, standard security measures, policies, standards, and guidelines in an ongoing effort to protect information resources, including student records. Students' personal information is protected through a variety of measures, including the administration of policy and security practices that govern the JagNetID and password associated with accessing AU's secure portals, and other services that support the educational process at AU.

Regarding system authentication, students are required to have a strong password abiding by the University Password Policy. Students must reset their password every 180 days and not reuse the account's previous 24 passwords. When students use their JagNetID and password to access information through the University's learning management systems (LMS) and other secure portals, their login credentials are encrypted for additional security.

In addition to adherence to the University Password Policy, multi-factor authentication (MFA) is required for access to all student systems. Augusta University implemented DUO MFA as an authentication solution for all accounts which requires all employees and students establish a second factor authentication method using DUO application push notifications, text, or phone call to validate a

successful user/password authentication to access the system. Upon successful user/password authentication to a DUO MFA protected system, the individual will also have to approve the authentication on the second factor device through app, text, or phone call approval.

All mission-critical University systems, including student records, are maintained on network servers in the University's enterprise data center or a trusted hosting provider. The enterprise data center employs state of the art layered security controls and physical access controls. Users of information systems are prohibited from accessing data or programs for which they are not authorized.

Faculty communicating with distance and correspondence education students are advised to be aware of the need to protect the privacy of their students and are encouraged to use the communication systems embedded with the schools Learning Management System for course and program-based communications.

Student Services

Distance education students will have reasonable and adequate access to student services necessary to support successful completion of courses and programs. The services will be comparable to those offered to oncampus students. Each student service is charged with ensuring that distance education students enjoy the same or similar services as our face-to-face students.

Online Tuition and Fees

All tuition and fees associated with distance courses will be collected by the AU Business Office. Students are informed in advance of any additional fees associated with distance learning degree programs/courses at the time of registration. Charges are visible in the student information system (Pounce) upon billing. In addition, all tuition and fee schedules are publicly available on the Georgia Regents University website, including the costs associated with online courses so that students are notified in advance of registration of any additional expenses. All departments must provide all tuition and fee information to the University tuition and fee committee each semester.

Online Student Privacy Protection

All faculty, staff and students shall comply by Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). AU abides by FERPA in protecting the confidentiality of student records. Written information about this act, and AU's process for complying with its provisions, are published on the institutional website which is publicly available to all students. Students are notified of their FERPA rights during orientation and reminded annually thereafter through the student handbook, the Course Catalog, the Office of the Registrarweb site, and an annual notification to each student via his or her official AU e-mail address.

If a student believes that AU has failed to comply with the requirements of FERPA, the student has the right to file a complaint of the alleged violation with the U.S. Department of Education. To ensure that faculty and staff understand and carry out the commitments to confidentiality, integrity, and security of student academic records AU requires annual FERPA training as part of its standard employee-compliance training.

AU utilizes Banner as the university-wide student information management system to store and manage electronic student information. In addition, AU has multiple processes and procedures in place to ensure protection of security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records.

REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

See policy list above.

RELATED POLICIES

See policy list above.

APPROVED BY:

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 11/29/2021

President, Augusta University

Date: 11/29/2021